

SKILLS FOR DECENT EMPLOYMENT

Empowering the youth and marginalized groups at home and abroad with 21st century skills



To achieve Vision 2021 and propel Bangladesh farther towards emerging as a strong middle income country, empowering citizens at home and abroad with 21st century skills will be crucial. Inward remittances made by millions of hard working Bangladeshis abroad amounts to USD 12.49 billion – which is 7 times greater than Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). However, since as many as 80% of those migrating abroad are untrained, unfortunately they are only able to secure menial, low paying jobs. This is reflected by the fact that inward remittance per capita is a meagre USD 1,310 – to put this in context, for Philippines, it's USD 4,000; even Nepal boasts a much higher average of USD 3,000 per capita.

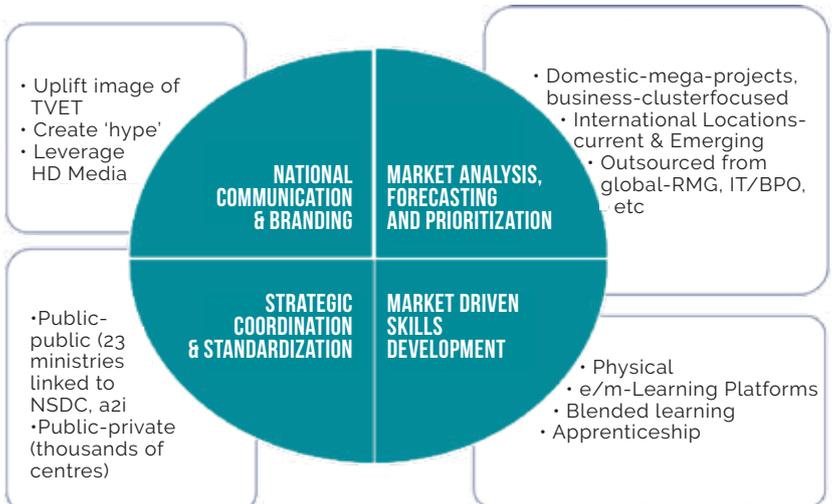
Re-inventing the image and branding of Technical and Vocational Education & Training (TVET) to make it more appealing to the youth and catalyzing affirmative action in favor of marginalized and disadvantaged groups thus constitute critical steps that need to be taken forward and completed under the new sustainable development framework.

azi's Holistic Strategy

azi is the key driver from the Prime Minister's Office of the government's public service innovation agenda. Aligned with the importance of skills development in the context of Bangladesh and the high priority accorded to this issue by Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself, azi is working with a whole-of-government approach applying behavior change methodologies and leveraging the rapid expansion of technologies to create an enabling environment for the development of 21st century skills in Bangladesh.

azi Programme of the Prime Minister's Office is spearheading efforts to 1) Increase remittance per capita, 2) Ensure decent work for everyone, particularly the youth, migrant workers and disadvantaged groups such as:

- Women and girls
- People with disability
- Ethnic minority communities
- Out-of-school adolescents
- Empowering the vast number of youths in 'qawmi madrasas' to craft a better future for themselves





Market Analysis, Forecasting and Prioritization

According to ILO, Bangladesh's labor force is growing at a rate of 2.2% which means every year 1.7 million new labor forces are coming into the labor market. However, every year only 1.2 million youths are being trained by government operated skills development training agencies leaving an unmet need for skilled human resources by both local industries and international markets. This can be attributed largely to a lack in communication and coordination between employers and skills development agencies. As a result, the rates of youth unemployment (10.9%) and underemployment (18.7%) are creeping up (ILO, 2016).

a2i conducting a study jointly with Bangladesh Economic Zones Authority (BEZA) for the local market; and with Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment for the international markets to:

- Analyze demand and prioritize skills development
- Particularly, with a strategic focus on meeting the demand for skilled workers in mega projects like the construction of the Padma Bridge, Metro Rail, Chittagong Expressway and the expansion of the Export Processing Zones (EPZs), Economic Zones (EZs) and so on.

Market driven skills development

Skills Development Through Apprenticeship in Informal Sectors

a2i, in partnership with ILO, has started skills development through apprenticeship in informal sectors in 30 Upazillas with 600 informal industries.

- After graduating, the participants will receive internationally recognized National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF)'s Pre-Vocational Level 1 and NTVQF Pre-Vocational Level 2 certificates.
- A total number of 1200 rural employed youths are now taking on-the-job training as apprentices in 35 trades
- Also working to certify the "ustaaads" or master trainers

Job Placement Following Skills Development for Ethnic Minority Communities

a2i is partnering with BGMEA and the Skills for Employment Investment Program (SEIP) of the Finance Division to ensure 'equitable' access to customized skills development facilities and job placement for 'Plain Land Ethnic Minority Communities'.

- More than one hundred training institutes have been established for them by the Prime Minister's Office.
- The instructors for the institute are also being recruited from these communities.
- a2i have also created innovative incentive mechanisms since unlike orthodox trainees, people from minority groups don't proactively join the institute or enroll to its programs

- So, a2i is actually creating an entire enabling environment for empowering these minority communities to improve their lives and livelihoods.

This program will create extensive employment opportunities for the unemployed youths in rural communities. Piloting in currently ongoing in Sirajganj District in two trades - Woven and Knit Machine Operation. Youths who are aged between 18 and 35 and want decent jobs in Garment Industry can join the 2-month long training program. After successful completion of the training, the participants will get decent jobs in the Garment Industry.

Empowering Millions of Orphaned Youths with Skills to Transform Their Own Lives

a2i is exploring the design of an intervention to potentially revolutionize the mindset of youths in the 'qawmi madrasa system' in Bangladesh. The situation at present is one where millions of orphaned and under-privileged under the madrasa system are exposed to a curriculum that does little to impart useful education and knowledge. The result is all they end up learning is some Arabic; that's all.

a2i aims to empower these thousands and millions of youths to turn around their lives. a2i is designing an intervention that will create the scope for them to learn at least one skill that is in great demand in local and foreign markets alongside their traditional curriculum. Thus, coupled with their Arabic communication skills, this intervention could, for example, give these youths a competitive edge in various skilled and semi-skilled markets in the Middle East. By doing so, not only will it save numerous young, innocent lives from the clutches of fundamentalism and extremism, but also bolster the country's image and foreign remittances.

Developing Women ICT Freelancers

With an emphasis on the remotest and most under-privileged areas, a2i, SME Foundation, Bangladesh Women in Technology (BWIT) with support from the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs jointly targeted 3,000+ women from all over the country to develop them as ICT entrepreneurs/freelancers.

Ultra-Poor Women's Skills Development for Self-Employment

Collaboration with SWAPNO project of UNDP to initiate skills development and self-employment amongst ultra-poor women.

Integrating Skills Development with Stipend Programs

Collaboration with Higher Secondary Stipend Project of Ministry of Education for integrating skills development with stipend programs.

Developing Skilled Women IT Technicians in Rural Areas

Partnership with Microsoft Bangladesh to create woman Hardware Technicians and IT Support Technicians in rural areas. As of November 2016, skills development of 3,500 rural women completed.

Mukto-Paath: Bangladesh's e-Learning Platform for Learning 21st Century Skills

a2i is developing digital solutions such as 'Mukto-Paath' – an e-Learning platform that has the potential to become Bangladesh's 'Coursera' - that can be leveraged for efforts to build skills and create jobs especially for Bangladeshi citizens working abroad and youths who wish to diversify their portfolio of skills that are highly in demand in the market while continuing their studies.

Skills for Employment in Bangladesh: The Big Picture

BANGLADESH'S TOTAL POPULATION IS 159 MILLION (BBS, 2015)

LABOR FORCE IS 79 MILLION (WORLD BANK, 2014)

LABOR FORCE IS GROWING AT A RATE OF 2.2% WHICH MEANS 1.8 MILLION NEW ENTRANTS INTO THE LABOR MARKET EACH YEAR (ILO, 2016)

CURRENT UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IS 4.3%

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE (10.9%) AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATE (18.7%) ARE STEADILY MOVING IN AN UPWARD DIRECTION (WORLD BANK, 2015)

13,163 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES INCLUDING BOTH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ONES

• TRAIN 1.4 MILLION ANNUALLY

ONLY 1.2 MILLION YOUTHS ARE BEING TRAINED BY GOVERNMENT'S SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES

POTENTIAL FOR CREATION OF 1 CRORE JOBS IN 100 ECONOMIC ZONES

400,000 GO ABROAD EACH YEAR SEEKING EMPLOYMENT OVERSEAS AND 80% OF THEM ARE UNTRAINED

• CURRENTLY SEND BACK USD 12.49 BILLION IN REMITTANCES

• 8% OF GDP AND 9 TIMES OF FDI

• BUT PER CAPITA, IT'S JUST USD 1,310

• FOR PHILIPPINES, IT'S USD 4,000

• EVEN NEPAL BOASTS A MUCH HIGHER USD 3,000

• BANGLADESH'S FOREIGN REMITTANCE INFLOW CAN REACH USD 30 BILLION, IF MIGRANT WORKERS RECEIVE PROPER SKILLS

Strategic Coordination & Standardization

There are 28 departments under 23 ministries directly involved in skills development or TVET. The National Skills Development Council (NSDC), led by the Honorable Prime Minister, has been founded to coordinate and accelerate the skills development initiatives to make a bridge between different organizations engaged in skills development and employment generation. a2i is supporting NSDC to:

- Bring together all players from across the ecosystem
- Drive the dialogue by discussing key issues, challenges and opportunities
- Moreover, a2i and NSDC are jointly developing a 'Skills & Employment' dashboard to coordinate and monitor all the skills development initiatives of the country.

National Communication & Branding

Re-inventing the Image and Branding of TVET in Bangladesh by Leveraging a2i Human Development Media (HD Media)

TVET has a stigma associated with it in Bangladesh that this is for students who are unable to "make it" or, achieve success through mainstream education. a2i is developing a 3600 Human Development Media platform leveraging both new and traditional media to not just "uplift" the image of TVET but actively engage the youth and guiding them to see it in a whole new light – as an appealing avenue that can lead to exciting opportunities, success, prosperity and most importantly, dignity and recognition.

Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability and Decent Work 2016

a2i is Co-Organizing "Dhaka Summit on Skills, Employability and Decent Work 2016" going to be held from 11-13th December 2016 along with Ministry of Labor and Employment (MoLE), Bangladesh Employers' Federation (BEF) and National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE). Considering the importance of the skills development in the context of Bangladesh and the high priority accorded to skills by the government, the private sector and the development partners, the summit will have an overarching skills agenda towards promotion of decent work. The event is supported by the National Skills Development Council (NSDC), International Labor Organization (ILO), World Bank, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA), Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers & Exporters Association (BKMEA) and Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD).

Way Forward

In the last 8 years, the boldness of vision embodied by the dynamic leadership of Honorable Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, established a new development paradigm in Bangladesh. The country is progressing towards becoming a strong middle income country but, more importantly, by human development indicators, it has already achieved a level of development commonly predicted for twice its per capita income.

However, today's globalized economy is undergoing major changes. To harvest the demographic dividend that the country is poised for and consolidate the gains of Bangladesh's development miracle, a2i will continue its strategic interventions to deepen understanding of this transformation and its implications for empowering our citizens - particularly the youth and those working abroad - with 21st century skills, formulate supportive policies and initiate strategic efforts to achieve SDG 8 - decent work for all.

APPRENTICESHIP IN
35 TRADES WITH 600
INDUSTRIES.



1,200 UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS
ARE RECEIVING SKILLS
THROUGH APPRENTICESHIP
IN 30 UPAZILLAS.



600+ RURAL
UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS
REGISTERED FOR OVEN
AND KNIT MACHINE
OPERATION TRADES.



A2I'S SKILLS FOR DECENT EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE: AT A GLANCE



3,500 RURAL WOMEN
WORKING AS HARDWARE
TECHNICIAN/IT SUPPORT
TECHNICIAN AFTER
RECEIVING SKILLS.



1,300+ WOMEN ARE WORKING
AS ICT FREELANCER/ICT
ENTREPRENEURS AFTER
RECEIVING SKILLS ON GRAPHIC
DESIGN/DATA ENTRY/
ACCOUNTING.



200 HIGHER
SECONDARY STUDENTS
ARE RECEIVING SKILLS IN
DIFFERENT TRADES IN 10
UPAZILLAS.



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